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ABSTRACT

The report describes accomplishments of a program designed to promote abilities of 75 potentially gifted culturally different students in grades 3-4. Student selection procedures included the Basic Structure of Intellect (SOI) Learning Abilities Test and teacher interviews. The curriculum emphasized SOI materials and cultural arts. Detailed data of student performance on the Cognitive Abilities Test, the Otis-Lennon, and the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children-Revised are presented. Additional evaluative material includes results from surveys of teachers of the gifted. Among findings cited are that 30% of the 67 children enrolled in the project were being considered for placement in the regular gifted program; that 39 Ss made 10% or higher gains over previous scores on standardized tests; and that teachers felt the students who moved on to the regular gifted program made satisfactory adjustments. (CL)

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DIVISION OF SPECIAL INSTRUCTION

DEPARTMENT OF SPECIAL EDUCATION

PILOT PROJECT FOR POTENTIALLY GIFTED MINORITY STUDENTS - GRADE 3-4 (ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION)

PROJECT EVALUATION

(3rd YEAR)

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A. INTRODUCTION

On October 15, 1980 sixty-nine (69) third grade children were enrolled in a Pilot Project for Potentially Gifted Culturally Different Students. This special project concerned itself with children endowed with more than average ability, but perhaps hindered by economic circumstances or culture from achieving their true potential. Instruction took place in five self-contained classrooms. Student strengths and weaknesses were assessed using teacher observation and diagnostic testing and a program was designed to build upon these strengths and to develop strategies to encourage cognitive development and to challenge children academically.

At the conclusion of the first year (June 1981) a complete evaluation of the Project was prepared. The need for the Program, justification and rationale, objectives and findings are discussed in that report. A copy may be obtained through the offices of Dr. Ronald Howells, Project Manager.

This current report updates that original report and includes data, significant findings and achievements for the third year, 1982-83.

This report also includes the results of a survey of teachers in the regular gifted child program who are working with students who participated in this special pilot project. There was a great need to evaluate the adjustment and performance of project students in regular gifted child classes.

B. PROCEDURES

1. Student Selection

The Basic SOI Learning Abilities Test, a test not solely dependent upon language ability, was administered during the Spring of 1982 to 132 second and third grade culturally different students. The students were first identified by classroom teachers according to the criteria listed below. The children were located in elementary schools throughout the four areas of the County.

Suggested Criteria for Selecting a Group of Potential Candidates

A. Minority students currently in grades 2-3 who demonstrate achievement and or potential achievement in several of the following areas:

1. Expresses self well, both written and orally
2. Grasps new ideas and concepts quickly
3. Good self-confidence
4. Gets along well with others
5. Works well independently
6. Shows good self-discipline

The Resource Teacher-Project Manager interviewed the grade 2-3 teachers and utilized the above criteria in selecting students to be tested.

From the group tested, 67 were selected (8 children were retained in the Program for a second year) who scored, in order of priority:

1. At least three grade levels above their current grade (gifted range) on at least 5 parts of the SOI Test.

2. At least three grade levels above their current grade on at least 3 parts of the SOI Test.

3. At least two grade levels above their current grade on at least 3 parts of the SOI Test.

2. Project Staff

The seventy-five children selected to participate in the third year of the Program were placed, with parent permission, into the five classrooms, county-wide. The same five teachers who taught the second year of the Project returned with their full-time aide. Dr. Ronald F. Howells, Resource Teacher and Project Manager, coordinated the five Programs. The building principal at each Project site was responsible for administration. The Special Education Specialist for the Gifted monitored staff training and other technical assistance was provided by the Director of Special Education.

3. Instructional Program/Curriculum

The Palm Beach County Unified Curriculum Grade 3-4 was utilized in all programs. The results of the Structure of Intellect (SOI) testing were used with the SOI curriculum materials to strengthen areas of weakness and allow teachers to develop programs for and work with children on an individual basis.

Numerous commerically prepared curriculum materials were used to develop and encourage independence and strengthen the skills of convergent and divergent thinking through inquiry and problem solving. Special materials were ordered for the Project and were used to develop critical thinking skills and provide essential additional experiences in the language arts areas.

In addition, the Cognitive Abilities Test was administered during the fourth week of class to further help identify student abilities in the verbal, quantative, nonverbal reasoning and problem solving areas. The curriculum used in the Project allowed for a variety of teaching strategies and was designed to attack weak skill areas and to develop academic strengths.

An important part of the curriculum was the cultural arts emphasis. Through field trips to area museums, art galleries and theatres the children received cultural experiences designed to broaden their

horizons and awareness. The children participated in special programs at Florida Atlantic University-Pine Jog Environmental Center, The Science Museum of Palm Beach County and Jupiter Marine Science Center. The students were invited to several special concerts and participated in a program for gifted students at the Society of the Four Arts on Palm Beach.

From the first three years of experience (pilot status) a written curriculum of objectives/materials will be produced by the project manager during the summer of 1983.

4. Parent Participation

Based upon the first two years of experiences, it was found that close parent-teacher communication and parent cooperation was essential for the development of the child.

Two Parent Orientation-Information sessions were held in the evenings during the school year. The classroom teacher and Resource Teacher were present to suggest ways parents could take a more active role in their child's education. Parents were urged to encourage their children and to provide an environment conducive to study.

5. Program Locations

The seventy-five children were enrolled as follows:

South Area, Delray Beach - 15 in grade 4

Central Area, West Palm Beach - 13 in grade 4, 2 in grade 5

N. Central Area, West Palm Beach - 5 in grade 3, 10 in grade 4

North Area, Riviera Beach - 15 in grade 4

West Area, Belle Glade - 11 in grade 4, 4 in grade 5

C. EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT

1. The Cognitive Abilities Test (Thorndike and Hagen)

The Cognitive Abilities Test was again utilized during the first month of the Program. The test results help to provide further information on student cognitive abilities and assist teachers in planning programs and strategies.

The CAT scores are presented with Otis-Lennon (OLSAT) scores (where available) and compared with WISC-R (May, 1983) scores as one measure of student intellectual growth.

The General Characteristics of the CAT are presented on the following page with tables of the test-retest results and gains made.

Introduction

Theoretical Background

The *Cognitive Abilities Test, Multi-Level Edition, Form 3*, has evolved from twenty-five years of experience with its predecessors, the *Lorge-Thorndike Intelligence Tests* and the *Cognitive Abilities Test, Form 1*. Over this period of time, there has been considerable research on cognitive development, information processing, and lateralization and specialization of functions in the two hemispheres of the brain. All these threads of research have influenced the development and construction of the *Cognitive Abilities Test*.

Theories of cognitive development and research on children's and adults' thinking clearly show that there are three major types of symbols involved in cognitive reasoning. These are verbal symbols, quantitative or numerical symbols, and spatial or geometrical symbols. Any procedure designed to assess cognitive functioning must provide opportunities for the individual to show how well he or she can work with each of these three types of symbols. Research on the brain, particularly that dealing with specialization of functions in the two hemispheres, indicates that individuals vary greatly in how they process different symbols; they vary also in their preference for and skill in working with the different types. In other words, there are large intraindividual differences in patterns of development of cognitive abilities. To be maximally useful, a procedure designed to appraise cognitive abilities should provide information on these intraindividual differences.

The *Cognitive Abilities Test* has been constructed to provide a variety of tasks using each of the three types of symbols — verbal, numerical and spatial. These tasks require the individual to abstract and use relationships among the presented symbols. The tests that appraise ability to work with each type of symbol have been organized into separate batteries and separate scores are reported for each battery. This procedure permits one to examine the pattern as well as the level of each individual's cognitive development, thereby increasing the value of the *Cognitive Abilities Test* as a diagnostic instrument. The information yielded by the test should provide a basis for more effective intervention in schools or other settings where the goal is to enhance individual development.

Over the past ten or fifteen years, there has been considerable research on irrelevant factors that influence performance on tests of various kinds. On cognitive ability tests, it has been shown that complexity of sentence structure, or vocabulary that is too difficult for a particular age or socio-economic group, or highly specialized content can introduce a level of difficulty that interferes with an individual's performance and may lead to a false picture of that individual's cognitive development. The authors of the *Cognitive Abilities Test* have taken steps to eliminate such irrelevant sources of difficulty. Each item on the verbal tests has been reviewed for vocabulary level and complexity of sentence structure.

All the items on all of the tests have been reviewed to eliminate those whose content would be biased toward or offensive to any group of individuals. Items that survived the initial review were administered to a large sample of students that included an identified sample of minority students. Separate analyses of item difficulty were made for white and for minority students and for males and females. Items that showed atypical patterns of difficulty between white and minority students or between males and females were eliminated from the final test. The procedures used in constructing the test have resulted in subtests in which the basic elements of the tasks have been kept relatively simple, clear and familiar. Thus, an individual's score on the test will reflect primarily his or her ability to discover relationships and show flexibility in thinking.

TEST RESULTS

Student Number	Cognitive Abilities Test (C.A.T.)* 1982	OLSAT School Testing 1980-82	WISC-R 1983	Gains**
1	100	129	127	**
2	106	---	107	
3	96	94	110	**
4	103	---	124	**
5	86	94	91	
6	98	100	119	**
7	103	---	115	**
8	102	98	120+	**
9	93	105	100	
10	92	98	104	**
11	90	117	125	**
12	100	101	103	
13	96	88	100	**

* Combined verbal, quantative, nonverbal score

**C.A.T. and OLSAT are group I.Q. assessments - However they are useful to suggest growth (gains) when compared to WISC-R (10% or better over C.A.T. and/OLSAT)

TEST RESULTS

Student Number	Cognitive Abilities Test (C.A.T.)* 1982	OLSAT School Testing 1980-82	WISC-R 1983	Gains**
1	98	School Didn't Participate in OLSAT	107	**
2	96		120	**
3	112		128	**
4	100		127	**
5	103		133	**
6	101		103	
7	98		119	**
8	98		102	
9	91		99	

* Combined verbal, quantative, nonverbal score

** C.A.T. and OLSAT are group I.Q. assessments - However they are useful to suggest growth (gains) when compared to WISC-R (10% or better over C.A.T. and/OLSAT)

TEST RESULTS

Student Number	Cognitive Abilities Test (C.A.T.)* 1982	OLSAT School Testing 1980-82	WISC-R 1983	Gains**
1	115	125	138	**
2	122	118	121	
3	117	127	142	**
4	108	121	137	**
5	116	118	114	
6	97	98	105	
7	93	101	121	**
8	102	103	140	**
9	106	114	123	**
10	103	115	131	**
11	105	107	123	**
12	99	114	118	**
13	91	96	103	**
14	96	98	131	**

* Combined verbal, quantative, nonverbal score

** C.A.T. and OLSAT are group I.Q. assessments - However they are useful to suggest growth (gains) when compared to WISC-R (10% or better over C.A.T. and/OLSAT)

TEST RESULTS

Student Number	Cognitive Abilities Test (C.A.T.)* 1982	OLSAT School Testing 1980-82	WISC-R 1983	Gains**
1	91	---	89	
2	113	125	119	
3	86	105	123	**
4	84	76	88	**
5	116	129	131	**
6	110	---	130	**
7	98	---	116	**
8	115	---	123	
9	102	103	139	**
10	100	---	117	**
11	---	113	109	
12	---	120	114	
13	---	123	125	
14	---	99	117	**

* Combined verbal, quantative, nonverbal score for first year students

** C.A.T. and OLSAT are group I.Q. assessments - However they are useful to suggest growth (gains) when compared to WISC-R (10% or better over C.A.T. and/OLSAT)

TEST RESULTS

Student Number	Cognitive Abilities Test (C.A.T.)* 1982	OLSAT School Testing 1980-82	WISC-R 1983	Gains**
1	107	103	105	
2	112	110	126	**
3	108	112	120	**
4	104	113	94	
5	95	95	105	**
6	107	105	105	
7	117	122	126	
8	100	120	123	**
9	108	110	120	**

* Combined verbal, quantative, non verbal score

** C.A.T. and OLSAT are group I.Q. assessments - However they are useful to suggest growth (gains) when compared to WISC-R (10% or better over C.A.T. and/OLSAT)

THE STRUCTURE OF INTELLECT (SOI) TEST OF LEARNING ABILITIES

Nature of the Test

The SOI Learning Abilities Test is not a traditional intelligence test, the purpose is not to find out, globally, how intelligent a student is. It is, rather, a test of specific learning abilities. It is a diagnostic instrument used as the initial step in a set of procedures that will individualize instruction according to an established theory of differentiated abilities. The SOI Learning Abilities subtests are based on Dr. J.P. Gilford's Structure of the Intellect factors. SOI curriculum materials have also been developed according to the Structure of Intellect model. The test, then, is a means of assessing an individual student's development on Structure of the Intellect factors, and relating the individual profile to curriculum materials that are also based on Structure of the Intellect factors.

The post-test was administered to the children who were new to the third year of the Program (1982-83) and who had first taken the test to gain admission to the Program.

On the following pages are found a description of each subtest utilized and the results by school and as a total group.

S.O.I. SUBTESTS UTILIZED

RESULTS SUMMARIZED ON THE FOLLOWING TABLE:

C= COGNITION M= MEMORY N= CONVERGENT PRODUCTION D= DIVERGENT PRODUCTION
E= EVALUATION

READING (Foundational abilities)

- X CFU—Visual closure
- ___ CFC—Visual conceptualization
- X EFU—Visual discrimination
- X EFC—Judging similarities and matching of concepts
- X MSU (visual)—Visual attending
- ___ MSS (visual)—Visual concentration for sequencing

READING (Enabling skills)

- X CMU—Vocabulary of math and verbal concepts
- X CMR—Comprehension of verbal relations
- X CMS—Ability to comprehend extended verbal information
- ___ MFU—Visual memory for details
- ___ NST—Speed of word recognition

ARITHMETIC

- ___ CFS—Constancy of objects in space (Piaget) *
- ___ CFT—Spatial conservation (Piaget) *
- ___ CSR—Comprehension of abstract relations *
- X CSS—Comprehension of numerical progressions
- X MSU (auditory)—Auditory attending
- ___ MSS (auditory)—Auditory sequencing
- ___ MSI—Inferential memory *
- ___ ESC—Judgment of arithmetic similarities
- ___ ESS—Judgment of correctness of numerical facts
- ___ NSS—Application of math facts
- X NSI—Form reasoning (logic) *

* Indicates mathematics-related ability

WRITING

- ___ NFU—Psycho-motor readiness

CREATIVITY

- X DFU—Creativity with things (figural—spatial)
- ___ DSR—Creativity with math facts (symbolic)
- X DMU—Creativity with words and ideas (semantic—verbal)

S.O.I. TEST OF LEARNING ABILITIES

	COGNITION	MEMORY	CONVERGENT PRODUCTION	DIVERGENT PRODUCTION	EVALUATION
	(CLASS AVERAGE GAINS IN YEARS)				
SCHOOL #1	1.8	1.6	2.0	1.7	.94
SCHOOL #2	.98	1.0	1.1	2.5	1.8
SCHOOL #3	1.1	2.1	2.9	3.3	.85
SCHOOL #4	2.5	1.2	1.2	2.7	1.2
SCHOOL #5	1.4	*	1.3	3.3	1.5

SUMMARY OF GAINS MADE - ALL SCHOOLS

COGNITION	1.6 years
MEMORY	1.5 years
CONVERGENT	1.7 years
DIVERGENT	2.7 years
EVALUATION	1.3 years

* Indicates only ony child failed to reach the highest level (grade 7-8) in the pre- and post-testing.

TESTING FOR THE REGULAR GIFTED CHILD PROGRAM

All students enrolled in the Program as of May 1983 (N=67) were recommended to be tested by the Palm Beach County School Psychologists for admission to the regular Palm Beach County Gifted Child Program.

The following tables show the results of that testing. Included are the children recommended by the testing psychologists for admission to the Gifted Child Program. Also included are the 1981-82 results of the testing done by School Psychologists for admission to Gifted last year and the gains made through the second year in the Program.

WISC-R TEST RESULTS - MAY 1983

	SCORE (FULL SCALE)	SCORE 1982	GAIN
# 1	135 (G)	120	15
2	133 (G)		
3	128 (G)	112	16
4	128 (G)		
5	127 (G)		
6	124 (recommended for SOMPA-MIGRANT)	118	6
7	121	105	16
8	120		
9	119		
10	113	101	12
11	107		
12	103		
13	102		
14	99		

(G) = Recommended for Gifted Child Program

CLASS AVERAGE SCORE ON WISC-R 119

AVERAGE GAIN FOR CHILDREN TESTED IN THE SECOND YEAR OF THE PROGRAM 13

WISC-R TEST RESULTS - MAY 1983

	SCORE (FULL SCALE)	SCORE 1982	GAIN
# 1	129 (G)	124	5
2	127 (G)		
3	* (G)		
4	125		
5	124		
6	123		
7	119		
8	115		
9	110		
10	107		
11	106		
12	104		
13	103		
14	100		
15	100		
16	91		

(G) = Recommended for Gifted Child Program

* (G) = Student had 139/96 - retesting on Binet (appears Gifted)

CLASS AVERAGE SCORE ON WISC-R 113

WISC-R TEST RESULTS - MAY 1983

	SCORE (FULL SCALE)	SCORE 1982	GAIN
# 1	139 (G)		
2	131 (G)		
3	130 (G)		
4	125	123	2
5	123		
6	123		
7	119		
8	117	99	18
9	117		
10	116		
11	114	120	-6
12	109	113	-4
13	89		
14	88		

(G) = Recommended for Gifted Child Program

CLASS AVERAGE SCORE ON WISC-R 117

WISC-R TEST RESULTS - MAY 1983

	SCORE (FULL SCALE)	SCORE 1982*	GAIN
# 1	142 (G)	121	21
2	140 (G)	114	26
3	138 (G)		
4	137 (G)	120	17
5	131 (G)		
6	131 (G)		
7	123		
8	123		
9	121	105	16
10	121		
11	119	118	1
12	118		
13	114		
14	105		
15	103		

(G) = Recommended for Gifted Child Program

* = Some students previously tested for Gifted before entering the project class.

CLASS AVERAGE SCORE OF WISC-R 124

AVERAGE GAIN FOR CHILDREN PREVIOUSLY TESTED 16

WISC-R TEST RESULTS - MAY 1983

	SCORE (FULL SCALE)
# 1	126*
2	126*
3	123
4	120
5	120
6	109
7	105
8	105
9	105
10	94

(G) = Recommended for the Gifted Child Program

CLASS AVERAGE SCORE ON WISC-R 113

* The two 126 students are being considered by south area special education coordinator and head psychologist for further testing and or recommendation for staffing. This is being done because of superior academic records and achievement scores in 90th percentile.

WISC-R TEST RESULTS - MAY 1983

SUMMARY RESULTS

AVERAGE SCORE - ALL CHILDREN TESTED (N=67) 117

CLASS AVERAGE SCORES

SCHOOL #1	124
SCHOOL #2	113
SCHOOL #3	113
SCHOOL #4	117
SCHOOL #5	119

CHILDREN TESTED IN BOTH 1982 AND 1983 (RETAINED A SECOND YEAR IN PROGRAM)

AVERAGE GAIN IN ONE YEAR 11
(2 OF 10 HAD A LOSS)

SURVEY RESULTS - TEACHERS OF THE GIFTED

PURPOSE

To determine to what degree former project students meet with success during their first year of participation in the regular gifted child program.

SUMMARY OF RESPONSES (N=24)

1. The initial adjustment upon entry into the regular GIFTED PROGRAM was:

Very Satisfactory	7 students
Satisfactory	9
Somewhat Difficult	8
Very Difficult	-

2. Adjustment after several months in the program was:

Very Satisfactory	14 students
Satisfactory	10
Some Difficulties	--
Very Difficult	--

3. Progress in the program toward meeting program objectives:

Very Satisfactory	10 students
Satisfactory	14
Somewhat Satisfactory	--
Unsatisfactory	--

4. Compared with the students who did not participate in our Project, how would you rate our former student's performance:

At or toward the top of the class	6 students
Somewhere in the middle	10
In lower third	8

5. Your overall assessment (performance, work habits, attitude, etc.) for our former Project students as a group:

Superior	2 students
Very Satisfactory	11
Satisfactory	3
Below Your Expectation	8

DISCUSSION

Although some (eight) students experienced a somewhat difficult initial adjustment, all students, after several months, had adjusted well with the majority very satisfactory.

All students admitted into the regular Gifted Child Program are making satisfactory to very satisfactory progress toward meeting Program Objectives.

When compared to the regularly admitted students (I.Q. 130-150+), 65% of the former Project students were in the middle to top half of their classes.

In overall assessment, 65% of the students are performing in the satisfactory range or above. However, it should be pointed out that the eight remaining students are working with only two teachers out of the eleven who reported.

D. CONCLUSIONS

1. The sixty-seven (67) children enrolled in the S.O.I. Project as of May 1983 were tested by school psychologists for possible placement into the regular Palm Beach County Gifted Child Program. As of the writing of this report, seventeen children (17) or 25% achieved the scores needed to be recommended for placement. However, three additional children are being seriously considered as explained in this report. There is real optimism that the final numbers recommended for the Gifted Child Program will be twenty (20) or 30%. Last school year 1981-82, 31% of the Project children were recommended.

2. Although 3 of the 9 children retained for a second year in the Project did make the necessary scores to be recommended for Gifted, a decision was made not to retain any students from the current class. This decision was based upon the need to identify and serve younger children (identify grade 2 and serve in grade 3) and to avoid mixed classes of third, fourth and fifth graders. Furthermore, given the large numbers of qualified students seeking admission to the Project, it is felt that a one year opportunity is most appropriate.

3. Gains made by the students during the 1982-83 year as measured by comparing Cognitive Ability Test (CAT) scores and OLSAT (where available) with WISC-R test results were gratifying. Thirty-nine (39) or 65% of the students made 10% or better gains over previous scores.

4. During the 1982-83 year, the students new to the Project (N=58) made from 1.3 to 2.7 average years growth in the five areas of intellect as assessed on the S.O.I. Test of Learning Abilities.

5. The Teachers of the Gifted who are currently working with former Project students reported in their evaluation that 100% of the students had made satisfactory adjustments to the regular Gifted Child Program. They further reported that 100% of the students are making satisfactory progress toward meeting the Gifted Child Program objectives.

6. It may be interesting to note that in both the first full years of the Project (1981-82 and 1982-83) that 44% of the Project students scored at or above the 120 (I.Q.) range on the WISC-R testing. In the State of Mississippi and others these children would be eligible for Gifted Child Programs.